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Vol. I.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

Essays on Truth and Error.

No. II.

ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

A FEW remarks have been made on the *importance* of the truth, and the *danger* of error, in religious concerns. We hope the readers of the Monitor are interested in this subject, and are often enquiring what the Lord our God hath said: guarding against the wiles of the arch deceiver. Our next inquiries are, what *is* truth? and, what *is* error?

But in answering these enquiries, it is obvious we need some *standard* or *rule*, by which we may try opinions or assertions. We hesitate not to say that, on divine subjects, the *Bible* is the only standard; and that the authority of this is sufficient and decisive.

Some, we know, have denied that the scriptures are from God. But in this publication it is probably unnecessary to repeat the common and unanswerable arguments by which they are supported. We write for those who know the scriptures, and who admit them as the revelation which Jehovah has condescended to make to mortals. And indeed it is not usual for the father of lies

to deny their authenticity, in his recent attempts against them. His device now is to allow men to believe them, and then pervert them: As when a party admits a witness to testify against him, and then by subtle arts destroys the effect of his testimony. We should be careful not only that we hear the scriptures speak for God, but that we receive with meekness the engrafted word, and not wrest it to our destruction. Some who read these pages may be in danger of receiving wrong ideas from the scriptures, through prevalent but erroneous modes of explanation. It shall be our object in the present number to point out some methods of interpreting scripture which ought to be avoided and to notice briefly the proper mode. "*Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*"

The scriptures are certainly written for our *instruction*. God hath condescended to use language adapted to our capacities. It is our part to read, believe, and obey. And all things essential are so clearly made known, that we are perfectly without excuse if we do not understand. We should pray for the teaching of the holy spirit, and compare spiritual things with spiritual. But under the influence of a right

temper of heart, we are to employ our natural powers in gaining a knowledge of the scriptures, as of any other writings. Let not each one have a private, separate, and mysterious construction, according to his own fancy or feelings. But let the scriptures be construed fairly, reasonably, consistently, and openly, on the principles of reason and sober judgment.

Every man has a right to read and judge for himself; and yet no one is authorized to have any "private interpretation." We do not mean that we are bound to receive the decisions of any *man* or *body of men*. Christ's Ministers are to teach and exhort. But *their* rule is the word of God; and their instructions are to be regarded no farther than they are conformable to it. We would keep at the greatest distance from assuming a right to dictate to others. Yet every individual in the world is bound, as a rational creature, and accountable to his Judge, to receive the truths which He has revealed, precisely as He has made them known.—Some directions follow which appear proper and necessary on this subject.

1. Let not *reason* usurp an *improper place*. It is the province of reason to examine the evidence that God has spoken, and to learn what he has said, according to the common use of language: but not to sit as a judge on the truth itself, to approve or reject; neither to attempt a perfect comprehension of infinite subjects. Many do not deny that certain things are clearly taught in scripture, but reject them, because they appear unreasonable. Thus, though the scripture saith expressly, of those

at the left hand on the day of judgment, "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment," you will hear men say it is unreasonable to suppose that God will punish any of his poor helpless creatures forever; therefore they believe all will be saved. Although the scriptures represent Christ as God over all, some think it unreasonable that he who was born of Mary is the eternal God; therefore they deny it. Others say it is very unreasonable to suppose that God hath chosen his vessels of mercy to eternal life, and left others to perish in their sins; although Paul by the holy spirit says, God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Others reject the idea that the holy Spirit is the sole author of the new birth without the co-operation of the sinner, because, say they, man is a moral agent, but this doctrine would make him a mere machine. Yet the scriptures assert that believers are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; by the washing of, regeneration, and the renewing of the holy Ghost." Indeed there is not one of the *offensive* truths of the bible, which has not been rejected, or violently explained into nothing by carnal men, because to them it appeared unreasonable. Thus doctrines are rejected which are the fruit of the eternal wisdom of God, which are revealed, (and acknowledged to be revealed,) in the scriptures, which are plain to him that spiritually understands, and which have been cordially embraced by some of the wisest of men. The doctrines of scripture surpass our

comprehension ; but they do not contradict our reason, when rightly understood. To reject a revelation of God on this account is like the conduct of a servant who will not do what he is bidden, because he does not understand all his master intends, nor see precisely *how* the thing commanded will promote an object in view. Shall masters after the flesh have the privilege of obedience from their servants without explaining every subject, or communicating all their plans, and he who is infinite in wisdom and authority be denied the same prerogative ? It is surely the duty of men, of creatures, of sinners, finite and blind, when by reason they are convinced that God has spoken, to receive his words without gainsaying or resisting.

The conduct of those who insist on comprehending, before they believe, is extremely presumptuous & inconsistent. Why do they not adopt the same principle in common affairs ? On this principle, I do not *breathe* ; for I know very little of the nature and properties of air, or of the office and operation of the lungs. On this principle, I have no soul ; for I never saw a spirit, and I can form no idea of the manner of its existence and its connection with my body. On this principle grass does not grow in the field, nor the rain descend from the clouds of heaven. For I know not the manner of their production. Must we reject the mysteries of revelation because they are incomprehensible ? First let us explain the mysteries of nature ; first let us fully understand the most common and familiar objects around us. Else let us be

consistent ; and, as we believe our senses and the testimony of men, where we have not a perfect comprehension, so let us give credit to the positive declarations of Him who *cannot* reveal himself fully unto His creatures, who conceals His brightest glories in condescension to our weakness, and who has taught us enough to enrapture, to save, and to bless us forever.

2. Let us not *bend* the declarations of scripture to our *previous notions and opinions*. This method of perverting the truth is allied to the former, but distinct from it. Some men look at scripture without any special attachment to a human system or sentiment, but under the influence of pride and carnal reasoning. Others, having gained ideas from some other source, read the word of God, rather to maintain their sentiment than to inquire after the mind of the Lord. Under the influence of these feelings a man passes over or explains away what appears not to favor him, and hastily applies to the support of his tenets those passages which only seem to favor it, or which will possibly admit of such a construction — The danger of making this use of scripture is very great, and much increased by the secret imperceptible manner in which a partiality to an agreeable sentiment will operate upon the understanding.

3. Do not take *detached sentences* or passages, viewed as disconnected with other passages, to ground your sentiments upon them. This too is a common but very erroneous method. Few people attend to the *object* which the sacred writer has in view, or read enough at one time to appre-

hend the meaning of a passage in connection with those which precede and follow it. Hence difficulties often arise even in pious minds, which would be resolved by a more careful attention, and more enlarged acquaintance with the bible. Hence many doctrines are embraced, and supposed to be taught in scripture which the holy Ghost never designed to teach. If this were a proper method, any thing however absurd might be proved from the holy writings. Thus by one short verse in the 15th Chapter of the 1st of Corinthians the doctrine of universal salvation would be proved beyond controversy. 22d ver. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" Christ came to give his people eternal life, or everlasting salvation. All mankind die in Adam. The Apostle makes life as extensive as death. Therefore all mankind will have eternal life. But attend to the *connection* of the passage, and you will perceive that the Apostle's subject throughout the Chapter is the *resurrection of the body*. By being "made alive" therefore in the text he intends only the resurrection of the body, and shews that all will rise from their graves in Christ, as all die in Adam. He therefore leaves full room for an eternal separation to be made *after* the resurrection; and we see how that other passage is true where it is declared that "some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." So 2 Cor 3, 17, "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," is often urged to justify practices which tend not to edification, and which a God of peace, and not of confu-

sion, has not justified. By the *connection* it is easy to see that the Apostle, speaking of the unbelieving Jews, represents them as having a veil on their hearts, when they read their scriptures, even till that day, though Christ had come a light into the world, accomplishing the predictions of their scriptures. 'Nevertheless,' says he, "when it (i. e. the heart of the Jews,) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." He adds, "now the Lord is that Spirit," meaning the spirit he had mentioned in the first part of the chapter, who was able to take away the veil, and even to turn their hearts to the Lord. "And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Where the Spirit of the Lord *does* come and dwell, there is *liberty*, or *freedom* from the dominion of blindness of mind, and from the restraint of the veil upon the heart. How totally different is this interpretation from the other.

To expose the impropriety of such a method we need only apply it to common affairs. I promise my neighbor thus—"if you will labor for me to day, I will give you a dollar."—He does not labor, but comes to me at night demanding a dollar, and pleading my promise. I refuse. He quotes my words "I will give you a dollar." I insist that they were *connected* with other words, and *in that connection* were not a promise without a condition. He is not satisfied, but reports that I have broken my promise, and that I am a liar. But in this case every one who is informed of the real engagement will perceive that *he* is a liar and not I. How will sinners at the judgment seat

be overwhelmed with confusion, who have relied on the promises of the gospel, without forsaking their sins; who have trusted in the grace that bringeth salvation, but have overlooked God's holy and condemning law; having wrested the scriptures to their own destruction and made God a liar!

4. Do not make *your own experience* or that of *others* a rule for interpreting scripture. It is true that real believers know the truth, for they are taught of God. It shews them their own character so clearly, it points out to them such a necessary and adequate remedy, it is so adapted to all their various wants, it has such a living power to lead them to repentance, to duty to God, and salvation, that they cannot doubt it. This experience is to them the most convincing of all sources of evidence in favor of the scriptures.

But the particular dealings of God's Spirit with them, especially in their conversion, should not be, though they often are, made a standard of truth in the abstract, and a rule in judging of others. The reason of this is obvious. Though the *result* of the operations of the Spirit is the same in all believers, yet there is a great diversity of operations; not to say that it is often very uncertain whether our own feelings are the fruit of his influence, or not. It is manifest that all must be tried by the word, or the truth taught in scripture. Therefore, the word is the standard or criterion, and not the experience or feelings of men. When experience is compared with scripture, it often *illustrates* it, and enlarges our views of the truth there taught.

People often say, I can testify for this, and against that, for it agrees with my experience and feelings, or differs from them. In a certain sense this is proper and useful. We receive the witness of men, when it coincides with what we have learnt from the fountain of light. But the witness of God is greater. A true and enlightened Christian will not look within himself, or to others, for his rules of life and peace. There is no such private interpretation. It is granted you must know the truth for yourself, if ever you are saved. You must find the *seal* and *image* of the truth on your heart, but the truth itself is in the word of God.

5. Do not make *mysteries where there are none*. This method is the reverse of that where men blindly follow carnal reason, and reject all they cannot comprehend. In their humble acquiescence in the word of Jehovah, and their reverence for things sacred, some have erred, by endeavoring to find a mystical sense in the plainest passages. Many parts of the holy writings respect invisible spirits, eternal scenes, other worlds, and the deep things of God. But what is revealed on these subjects otherwise unknown, is often conveyed in plain and familiar language. And though the scriptures abound in figures, they are often taken from common and familiar objects. God has adapted himself to our capacities, and the way-faring man tho' a fool need not wander from the way of life. We therefore err if we look for a spiritual sense, an occult meaning, a mystical allusion, in every part of the sacred volume. We thus give the bible the character of a heathen oracle, dark, ambiguous, and

mysterious, as the house of death. We do not honor God by thus distinguishing his word from other writings. We rather impute to Him a conduct we should not wish to find in an earthly friend. From such an one we should receive with much greater pleasure an epistle in familiar language, than one which should abound in dark hints and mysterious suggestions. Some even carry this principle so far as to say *the whole bible* is to be thus interpreted; that it is altogether in spiritual language, so that a plain or a learned reader must be ever at a loss for the mind of God until some living oracle of wisdom shall instruct him, and inform him what God intended so totally different from what he has said. Let us beware of such thoughts of Him who giveth us line upon line and precept upon precept for our instruction and salvation.

6. In connection with this caution we add another. Do not expect *new revelations*. This is not properly an erroneous method of interpreting scripture, for the sentiment *rejects* scripture. But it is connected with this subject; and its advocates profess a regard for the sacred volume, as *subordinate* to the impulses of the Spirit. Some who embrace this sentiment speak with respect of the bible as a useful, but inferior guide, while others mention it with great indifference or contempt. I cannot let the occasion pass without reminding the reader of the words of Jesus, the last time he spoke to mortal man. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the

words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." The Spirit of God opens the understanding and the heart, and thus by his enlightening and sanctifying influence leads the believer into all truth *taught in scripture*, while he reproves the wicked *according to the word*. But the principle of many deluded souls is that the scriptures are of little or no use, being a dead letter; that the Spirit is given to every man, teaches him many things not found in scripture, and gives a meaning to what is contained there, entirely different, it may be, from the natural and obvious sense of the words. I cannot think that such are led by the Spirit of God; for He has completed His revelation; their opinions and practices in many things directly contradict Him; and they are the sport of every wind of doctrine. They do not *try the spirits* by the word, whether they be of God; but, following an impulse upon their minds, which giveth not account of any of its matters, they do not inquire whether that impulse is from God, satan, or their own vain and wicked imagination. But when a man yields himself to the control of his own feelings or fancies, he gives himself up to the devil, to be led where and how he pleases. He invites the father of lies to take the key of his mind and heart, to open and shut, to admit and exclude at his pleasure. And where will he go whom satan guides? He may not be led into immediate and open iniquity; for the deluded soul might take the alarm. But we may be sure he

will be led more cautiously, but not less securely, in the way to death and hell. I never met a person of this description whom there was any prospect of convincing or enlightening while he held fast this error. Where men will allow either reason or scripture, you know to what standard you may appeal in conversation. But *these* prophesy out of their own heart. A thing is made known to them, and they are certain it is correct. But others have no means of knowing it, till *they* shall condescend to inform them. This is a private, separate, unknown interpretation indeed. I must add, I believe it is often destructive.

7. Do not look for a *new translation* of the bible. It has been asserted that the scriptures as we now have them in the English language are not correctly translated from the original tongues, and that, if they were, there would be many important alterations in the sense. This has been said by some who ought to have known the fact, and is believed by some who have no means of knowing it. It is rare that the translation of any book conveys in every instance *precisely* the sense of the original. It is allowed that, in some cases our English words have altered their meaning since the present translation was made; in other cases the sense of the original might be *more clearly and happily* conveyed; in other cases of small consequence a wrong idea is given. Yet we assert without fear of contradiction from any sober and candid critic in the languages, that *all the alterations of language which could fairly be made for the better would make no*

alteration in one single doctrine or precept. And this, notwithstanding the great increase of biblical researches, both by friends and enemies of the truth as it is in Jesus. Away, then, with this vain pretence.

8. Lastly, *do not make a riddle-book, or lottery-box of your bible.* When a sinner has been alarmed and convinced, and is trembling under a view of God's wrath, he has taken up the scriptures, opened them at random, read the words "thy sins are forgiven thee," or some other sentence of encouragement, and, applying it to himself, as if it were a voice from heaven, has cried peace to his soul. Afterward, his life has proved to others if not himself that there was no peace, for that he was not truly penitent and reconciled to God. Professed Christians (and I am afraid real ones) have walked in darkness, and in the distress of their souls have opened the word of God, supposing that they might be directed to some word of comfort. Perhaps they have found it, and have been comforted, when an unrepented sin, which had hidden God's countenance from them, has remained and been fastened in their bosoms. A person has frequently supposed he found direction in duty, where the course had been doubtful, by a similar proceeding. Mr. Newton confesses this fault. "In going," says he, "to undertake the care of a congregation, I was reading, *Fear not, Paul, I have much people in this city.* But I was soon afterwards disappointed in finding that Paul was not John, and that Corinth was not Warwick." He was not the person addressed in

that passage. I have no doubt suitable passages of scripture are brought to our notice without our search, and when we open the holy volume at random. But I also believe it is tempting God, if we expect Him to give us direction in this way in every case of doubt and perplexity; and that we are extremely liable to awful mistakes and perversions if we use this method, and receive a comfortable passage, or follow a direction thus found, because it suits our feelings, seems apropos to our case, or come to us unexpectedly. We ought rather to inquire whether we are of the character and in the circumstances of those to whom the passage was originally directed; whether if we take the comfort, or follow the direction it gives, we shall act consistently with other duties, other scriptures, and the spirit and example of Christ. We should regard, not the manner of our finding a text, nor its partial adaptedness to our situation; but the real intention of the Spirit of God in it. Then, if it applies to us, and tends to humble us, lead us from sin, to glorify God, and promote the spiritual good of men, we may lawfully suppose that the passage belongs to us. But it cannot be too deeply impressed on our minds, that, by an incautious application of passages, sought at random, or casually brought to our minds we are liable to great and dangerous mistakes. Satan undoubtedly has power to open the leaves at a particular place, or suggest in this and other ways, passages which suit his purposes. God may justly leave us to misapply his word, if we are not careful to know and do his

will, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, but look for something equivalent to a voice from heaven when he has given us sufficient direction, and when perhaps our doubt or perplexity arises from having neglected to read his word, and to treasure it up in our hearts.

We must maintain the purity, the sufficiency, and the authority of the scriptures against the inventions of such as are wise in their own conceit, against all the delusions of fanaticism, and all the suggestions of the deceiver. Let us try every thing we hear, read, or think, by the sacred canon. Let plain good sense and sober reason be our interpreters of its language. But let us remember to open our *hearts* to the truth; for "with the *heart* man believeth."

Reader, perhaps you are in doubt concerning some things; but is there not enough plain to him that is willing to understand to convince him of sin, to turn him from the evil, to lead him to live continually on the free grace and fullness of the great God his only Savior, and to glory in his holy name as all his salvation and all his desire? Whatever doubts may exist on *some* points, is it not evident that you and I are lost, guilty, and polluted sinners, in infinite need of the grace of the Redeemer? It appears to me that if any one can doubt this, he was born blind, doubts his own existence, and will not believe himself. Is it not evident that he who dies impenitent must lie down in sorrow? It must be so, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Does one of my fellow-sinners, who is in this alarming

state, read these lines? Beloved soul, let me reason with you. Is it not true that *now* is the accepted time, that *now* is the day of salvation? It is; for you are not sent to hell, and the gospel still invites you. Is it not true, that Jesus is ready to receive you? It is; for he says, him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out; and many a poor, lost, wretch like yourself hath cried unto the Lord, and he *hath* heard him, and delivered him out of all his trouble. Is it not true that this Lamb of love will be angry, if you refuse him, and will soon swear in his wrath that you shall never see his rest? It is; for all men will allow that slighted abused love should not be offered to us forever; and reason and scripture agree in this, that those enemies of Christ, that would not that he should reign over them, should be brought forth, and slain before him; and that then there will be none to deliver out of his hand. To-day, then, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart, but accept his love.

VERAX.

MR. EDITOR,

It is, no doubt, known to many of your readers, that about the years 1741 and 2, there was a very great and general revival of religion throughout New-England. But perhaps some, who are acquainted with this fact, have not been informed, that in 1743 a large number of ministers assembled in Boston in order to give a united and public testimonial to this work of divine grace. I have in possession the result of the deliberations of this assembly, entitled,

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"The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New-England, at a meeting in Boston, July 7, 1743; occasioned by the late happy Revival of Religion in many parts of the land: To which are added Attestations contained in Letters from a number of their brethren, who were providentially hindered from giving their presence."

From this document I transcribe for the Monitor such parts as appear most interesting, and best adapted to give your readers an idea of the work, to which it relates.

"If it is the duty of every one, capable of observation and reflection, to take a constant religious notice of what occurs in the daily course of common providence; how much more is it expected, that those events in the divine economy, wherein there is a signal display of the power, grace, and mercy of God in behalf of the Church, should be observed with sacred wonder, pleasure, and gratitude?—Nor should the people of God content themselves with a silent notice, but *publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works.*"

"More particularly, when Christ is pleased to come into his Church in a plentiful effusion of his Holy Spirit, by whose powerful influences the ministration of the word is attended with uncommon success, salvation-work carried on in an eminent manner, and his kingdom, which is *within men*, and consists in *righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, is notably advanced,—this is an event, which, above all others, invites the notice, and bespeaks the praises of the Lord's people, and should be declared abroad for a memorial of the divine grace;—as it tends to confirm the divinity of a despised Gospel, and manifests

the work of the Holy Spirit in the application of redemption, which too many are ready to reproach ;—and as it tends to enliven the prayers, strengthen the faith, and raise the hopes of such as are waiting for the kingdom of God, and the coming on of the glory of the latter days.”

“ For these and other reasons, we, whose names are hereunto annexed, pastors of churches in New-England, met together in Boston, July 7, 1743, think it *our* indispensable duty, (without judging or censuring such of our brethren as cannot at present see things in the same light with us) in this open and conjunct manner to declare, to the glory of sovereign grace, our full persuasion, either from what we have seen ourselves, or received upon credible testimony, that there has been a *happy and remarkable Revival of Religion in many parts of this land, through an uncommon divine influence* ; after a long time of great decay and deadness, and a sensible and very awful withdraw of the Holy Spirit from his sanctuary among us.”

“ The present work appears to be remarkable and extraordinary,

On account of the numbers wrought upon :—We never before saw so many brought under soul-concern, and with distress making the inquiry, *what must we do to be saved ?* And these, persons of all characters and ages :

With regard to the suddenness and quick progress of it :—Many persons and places were surprised with the gracious visit together, or near about the same time ; and the heavenly influence diffused itself far and wide, like the light of the morning :

Also in respect of the degree of operation, both in the way of terror and in a way of consolation ; attended in many with unusual bodily effects.”

“ With respect to numbers of those, who have been under the impressions of the present day, we must declare there is good ground to conclude they are become real Christians ; the account they give of their conviction and consolation agreeing with the standard of the holy scriptures, corresponding with the experiences of the saints, and evidenced by the external fruits of holiness in their lives : so that they appear to those, who have the nearest access to them, as so many epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, attesting to the genuineness of the present operation, and representing the excellency of it.”

In their Advice, they say ; “ We would, therefore, in the bowels of Jesus, beseech such as have been partakers of this work, or are zealous to promote it, that they be not ignorant of satan’s devices ; that they watch and pray against errors and misconduct of every kind, lest they blemish and hinder that, which they desire to honor and advance. Particularly, that they do not make secret impulses on their minds, without a due regard to the written word, the rule of their duty ;”

“ That, to avoid Arminianism, they do not verge to the opposite side of Anti-nomianism ;”

“ That laymen do not invade the ministerial office, and, under a pretence of exhorting, set up preaching ;”

“ That ministers do not invade the province of others, and in *ordinary cases* preach in another’s parish without his knowledge, and against his consent ; tho, at the same time, we would have ministers shew their regard to the spiritual welfare of their people, by suffering them to partake of the gifts and graces of able, sound, and zealous preachers

of the word, as God, in his providence, may give opportunity therefor ;”

“ That people beware of entertaining prejudices against their own pastors, and do not run into unscriptural separations ;”

“ That they indulge not a disputatious spirit, which has been attended with mischievous effects ; nor discover a spirit of censoriousness, uncharitableness, and rash judging of the state of others ;”

“ And while we would meekly exhort both ministers and Christians, so far as is consistent with truth and holiness, to follow the things, that make for peace, we would most earnestly warn all sorts of persons not to despise these outpourings of the Spirit, lest a holy God be provoked to withhold them, and instead thereof to pour out upon this people the vials of his wrath, in temporal judgments and spiritual plagues ; and would call upon every one to improve this remarkable season of grace, and put in for a share of the heavenly blessings so liberally dispensed.”

Signed by “ Samuel Moody, Pastor of the First Church in York,” and by fifty-two others, among whom was Thomas Smith, pastor of a Church in Falmouth. Fifteen other ministers concurred with this testimony for the substance of it, on excepting against that article of itinerancy, or ministers and others intruding into other ministers’ parishes without their consent, which great disorder, say they, we apprehend not sufficiently testified against therein.”

Numerous written attestations were sent in by those, who could not attend the assembly in person. I make a few quotations from one, which purports to be “ From six of

the Rev. Pastors of the Eastern Association in the county of York.”

“ We the subscribers, taking into serious consideration the state of religion in our several charges, and throughout the land at this day, look on ourselves bound in the most express manner to declare ourselves with respect thereto.”

“ And inasmuch as it incontestibly appears to us from what we have seen among ourselves and in other places, that by an extraordinary divine influence, there hath been an happy revival of religion in our land ; we dare not but publicly speak out our grateful sense thereof to the honor of the free and sovereign grace of God.”

They, however, think themselves bound to bear joint and solemn testimony against certain “ prevailing errors in doctrine and disorders in practice, such as, a denying the doctrine of the divine decrees, justification by faith alone, irresistible grace in the conversion of sinners” &c. &c.

“ Signed,

Benjamin Allen, pastor of the second church in Falmouth.

William Thompson, pastor of the church in Scarboro’.

Samuel Jeffierds, pastor of the church in Wells.

John Hovey, pastor of the church in Arundel.

Nicholas Loring, pastor of the church in Northyarmouth.

Moses Morrill, pastor of the church in Biddeford.”

“ At an Association Meeting, Scarboro’, June 23, 1743 :

“ Voted, that the above declaration be delivered to the Rev. Mr. Smith, to be by him communicated at discretion to the venerable Convention of ministers, who are to meet in Boston the day after the approaching Commencement, as the senti-

ments of the Association with relation to the present religious appearances in the country."

"Benjamin Allen, Moderator.

The following note is added at the close of the document.

"The number of pastors here subscribing and attesting to a remarkable revival of religion, thro' an extraordinary divine influence, in many parts of this land, is one hundred and eleven. Of these, one belongs to the colony of Rhode-Island; eight, to the province of New-Hampshire; twelve, to the colony of Connecticut; the other ninety, to the province of the Massachusetts Bay. And there had doubtless been many more attestations from our brethren in Connecticut, if the proposal, that was published, had reached them seasonably." The above is at your disposal.

GAIUS.

MISCELLANY—No. I.

In pressing the importance of holy union among *real* christians Mr. Daniel Burgess, an English Divine of the seventeenth century, hath the following pithy remarks.

"I will be of all the body, that hath but one Head; of the whole society, that hath Christ for its Head, and his Spirit for its soul."

"They are *mischievously* against Christ, that are *dividingly* for him."

"I will labour to keep with all, as far and as long as they keep with God."

"God accepts not any gifts from a man *unreconciled* to his brother. Pharnaces, while he was up in rebellion, sent Cæsar a crown; but had this answer sent him, that, *he should first yield obedience, and then make presents.*"

"I will believe the old Shepherds, who say, that when many sheep do

push, great storms will rise: great storms indeed I will expect, when more than a few of Christ's flock turn wolves to each other."

"I will value the graces of love and concord, above the richest gifts of tongues, prophecy, and miracles. *So shall I always desire to agree with my brethren, as I desire the Lord Jesus to accept of me,* said Luther, as hot as he was.

"I will, in all combats, look to my Head. If contend I must for the faith, above all things I will seek the honour of the Lord of it. It shall be by his rule, that I will fight for his cause."

"*I will prefer the good of the ship above the good of my cabin: the good of the church above my own interest.* If called to it by my heavenly Father, I will take it for duty to *lay down my life for the brethren.*"

"Club-law is no branch of the *law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*"

"*I will admonish all eyes and heads to mind their need of hands and of feet: the more knowing sort of christians, and of greatest gifts, to mind their need of the active christians, that are but of meanest gifts.*"

"*I will ever beware of the prince of contentious devils: self is, without controversy, this Beelzebub.*"

"*I will not seat myself among tar, and tallow, and turpentine: Among men of spirits as disposed to take offence, as these natural bodies are to take fire.*"

"Never will I, as the Jews, for want of *arguments*, throw stones."

No. II,

It was not, however, Mr. Burgess' opinion, that even peace and unity in the church should be sought at the expence of the faith once delivered to the saints. For in his discourse on

Jude 3, entitled *contention for the truth*, he has the following pertinent remarks.

"Let every thing that hath holy breath, contend for the faith, even to its last breath." "If it be asked, for what it is that saints contend? the answer is, for the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

"The earnestness required in the said contention, is the zeal and fire of the whole man."

"Stick at no cost for the true way of salvation: though it be one every where spoken against, and by men and devils opposed. Get and keep it, at any rate; part with it at no rate."

"Error is a subtle harlot, and a bloody; if thou bestir not thyself, and watch, and pray, and strive, it will get the living-gospel out of thy bosom, and put in a dead and deadly one."

"Let no man deceive himself, the gospel is not sent to save them, that wrestle not for the gospel, while men and devils are wrestling against it."

"The vows of God are upon every saint. They are sworn, every soul of them, to stand, to live, and to die, by the gospel-truth."

"There is no such thing as sanctification, but by that truth: John 17, 17."

Error, can no more nourish or save a soul, than chaff, stubble, or poison itself, can maintain a body."

"They are cloven feet, that kick against gospel truth: the men, that contend against the doctrine of God, are far from the kingdom of God."

"There is no mouth set against the truth, but it is the devilspeaketh through it."

"The dust of gold is precious: every article of the christian faith is a jewel."

"No snake is to be spared, because its skin is painted: no error is to be

favoured, because it has a specious form of godliness, if it deny the power."

"God made not the world to be a hive of drones; nor hath Christ made the church to be so."

"Unlawful use of lawful things is the common bane of souls. Oxen and farms, shops and trades, are as full of spiritual dangers, as the Nile of Crocodiles."

"The head crowned with thorns, hath no delicate members: they, who can bear no hardship, are not of the body of Christ crucified."

"The Lord's prayer & the ten commandments are not to be set above the creed: christians are as much concerned to be sound in their judgments, as to be sincere in their desires, and clean in their doings."

"Madness is in the heart of those multitudes, who, though very sensible of sin in moral corruptions, are altogether senseless of sin in intellectual errors. Tho' they show a fear of corrupt manners, do show themselves fearless of corrupt minds. As tho' heresy were not damnable, as well as vice; and error as pernicious, as very profaneness." Hymeneus & Philetus make first a shipwreck of the faith, then of a good conscience. 1 Tim. 1.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

An Observable Providence.

MR. EDITOR,

THE following account of events which occurred a few years since is well authenticated; perhaps it will be instructive.

A farmer in a neighboring state, (whom we shall call ALAZON,) was visited by a friend from the place where he had formerly resided. He lived in a valley remarkably fertile, nearly enclosed by steep hills, which constantly replenished it with their fatness. God

had greatly blessed him in his basket and store, and all the labor of his hands. His heart was lifted up not with thankfulness, but with pride. He told his friend of his riches, and took him out to view his possessions. He boasted of his fruitful fields, his abundant harvests, and his excellent herds. He pointed to a large field of very promising corn, yet in the blade. "There," said he, "are fifteen acres. I would not thank the Almighty to insure me fifty bushels from every acre."

On the next day the heavens gathered blackness, the rain descended in an unusual manner, collected on the neighboring hills, and descended in torrents into the valley. The corn was washed away, the very soil torn up, and the dwelling-house of the secure and independent ALAZON swept from its foundation, and entirely destroyed.

We should gain instruction from every passing event. Such as are rather uncommon strike us more forcibly. I send you the reflections which occur to my mind on this interesting story.

1. We may here see the vanity and uncertainty of worldly possessions. What could seem to be more secure than the property of ALAZON? What more likely to endure than his prosperity? His property was not on the stormy ocean, at the mercy of the winds and waves. It was not treasured in a city where fire often destroys thousands and millions at once. It consisted in lands, and in the expected fruits of the earth, with those it had already yielded. He was saying, my house shall continue forever, and my farm to all generations. But in that hour, much of his wealth was swept away by the besom of destruction. O why will we labor for that which is not bread? Why wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?

2. Let us notice here the effects of prosperity on sinful, ungrateful men. It uniformly inflates their hearts with pride, as if their own wisdom and power had gotten them their wealth. It induces them to think less of their dependence & unworthiness than they did in the day of small things. It leads directly to carnal security, presumption, neglect of the soul, and casting off the fear of God. ALAZON felt and spake as if he were sole author of all his possessions, and held them and his own life absolutely at

his own disposal. Many others have done, and are daily doing the same. Many, like him, are the more unthankful, the more insolent, the more careless, and the more profane, as their worldly possessions, increase, and as God loads them more profusely with his benefits. Thus NEBUCHADNEZZAR walked in the palace of the kingdom, and said, "is not this great Babylon, that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Many, very many, who do not make an open and profane boast of their riches and grandeur, and do not thus freely declare their independence of the government of God, are nevertheless of the same spirit, and such sentiments and feelings are often rising in their hearts. It is even the universal course of mankind, without special & constant grace. As God's mercies are multiplied, they forget him; as his hand is manifestly opened to bless them, they consider less of Him and the operation of his hand. In the day of adversity, they consider; but when they are prosperous, they cast off fear, restrain prayer, trust in vanity, and hate his ways. The poor & destitute laborer is more sensible that his little all comes from God, than he who is loaded with his benefits. Who would believe, till he saw the fact, that creatures were found, on whom the goodness of God had this tendency, to drive them from him, and cause them to multiply their transgressions against Him? The fact, that this is common with men, is a clear proof and sufficient in itself, that all men have gone out of the way, that they are enemies of God, and dead in trespasses and sins.

3. Let us learn that, though the wicked prosper, yet there is verily a God that judges in the earth, and takes notice of all that is done among men. I say let us learn this, for we are all, like ALAZON, extremely liable to be ignorant of it or forget it. Men who are enemies of God say within their hearts, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard. But the wicked cannot go from his spirit, neither flee from his presence. And tho' he delays his judgments, being slow to anger; and waits to be gracious till the guilty wretches scoff at his word, say he delayeth his coming, and will never arise to

judgment; yet he will come, and will not tarry. Sometimes in this world, as in the case before us, he punishes daring iniquity with signal vengeance: often in the course of his common providence does he afflict and distress those who forget him. But for many he reserves the vengeance due to their crimes till that day of the revelation of his righteous judgment, when every work shall be brought into light, with every secret thing, even the counsels of the heart be made manifest. It is not so much His method to notice with special judgments any daring iniquity now, as it was under the ancient dispensation. Yet he sometimes does, that the wicked may see that he is not slack concerning his promise, and that they may not forget a judgment to come. Often does the careless sinner find his punishment in that thing wherein he had sinned. A-LAZON boasted profanely of his riches, and his riches took to themselves wings and flew away. Perhaps if we knew the secret lives and the hearts of men we could perceive such a coincidence much more frequently than we do. But surely it is evident in this and all other temporal judgments, that God is angry with the wicked every day, and that he will by no means clear the guilty, without repentance in that day when it will be seen not only that our God is a consuming fire, but that the Lamb who bled for sinners is angry with them, and that mercy joins with justice in saying cut them down, why cumber they the ground? O let the goodness of God lead us to repentance; and his judgments in this life induce us to flee from the wrath to come and lay hold on everlasting life. Then shall we have riches which cannot be taken from us, a habitation which cannot be swept away, pleasures which will never take off our hearts from God.

A Mr. M—— in the county of C——, who sustains a fair christian reputation, and is a very judicious man, related to me, a few months since, the following interesting story. You may rely on its truth. By inserting it in the *Christian Monitor*, you may confer a benefit on those christians, who indulge a complaining spirit under adverse providences, and will oblige

A CORRESPONDENT.

“NEARLY twenty years ago, after I had been a professor of religion a considerable time, I wounded myself by the stroke of an axe, and was obliged to confine myself to my house for a number of weeks. Under my confinement, I was quite impatient. I did not regard the wound as inflicted by the hand of God, nor was I humbled by it. My thoughts were much engrossed by worldly concerns. To a neighbor, who called to see me, I one day said, with a self-confident and unsubmissive spirit, “when I do get out, I will redeem the time,”—meaning, that by more vigorous exertions I would perform as much labor, as tho’ I had not been confined. As soon as I was able to go abroad, and sooner than I could do it with prudence, I applied myself to work with great ardor, and pursued it incessantly for a number of weeks. I one day went into the woods, with two of my neighbors, to provide myself with fuel. I had fallen a tree, and was cutting on the trunk, having my back turned towards one of my companions, who was also falling a tree.—He did not apprehend I was in danger, believing the tree would fall in the opposite direction, and supposing, if it should not, that I was out of its reach. In both opinions he was mistaken. My other companion saw the tree coming directly upon me, and gave me the alarm. I had scarcely time to turn myself round, and to move a foot or two from my position, when one of the upper branches struck me, and prostrated me to the earth. The bone of one of my arms was fractured by the blow. This was the only material injury I received; but if I had remained in my position, I should have been killed on the spot; for the body of the tree would have struck exactly on my head.—As

soon as I arose from the earth, and came to my recollection, these words addressed themselves to my mind, as tho' coming directly from heaven, 'whose time have you redeemed now?' I saw no shape and heard no voice; but the question was to me as real, as tho' it had been audible, and it penetrated my very soul. God at once seemed to surround me. His chastising hand was visible. I had such a sense of the evil of the sin I had committed, as is not to be described. I was ashamed, astonished, and confounded. Such was the distress of my soul, that I was not conscious of bodily pain. It was with difficulty I could speak, or refrain from crying aloud. My neighbors proposed to accompany me to my home, which was distant about two miles; but I declined their proposal, telling them I was able to go without their help. Guilt and shame still oppressed my spirit; and I was no sooner alone, than I gave vent to my feelings by weeping.—This providence, I have reason to believe, was designed for my good. It was long before the impression it produced, was removed from my mind. I trust it was truly sanctified to me. It cured me of that repining, and, in some degree, of that worldly spirit, which I before felt, and brought me to a closer and more humble walk with God. I have reason to bless Him for the visitation."

MR. EDITOR,

THE question has been asked me several times of late, what are we to understand by the good Olivetree, Rom. 11, 17. Should you think the following remarks calculated to be useful, they may be published in the Christian Monitor. B. N.

It is a common, but just, remark,

that the scriptures are the best expositor of the scriptures. In explaining them, we ought then to *compare spiritual things with spiritual things*, in order to find out their true import. And he is hardly to be trusted as an expositor, who will not do this.

It is also to be observed, that when an attempt is made to put a new, or unusual construction upon any phrase, or passage, to answer a particular purpose, it is a very suspicious circumstance. For the scriptures should not be wrested to support our sentiments; but our sentiments should bow to the authority of the scriptures. And he, who will not yield his sentiments, however plausible, to such authority, has little claim to the christian character. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isai. 8, 20.

These introductory remarks being made, let us consider the question; What is meant by the good Olive-tree? Rom. 11, 17.

Some profess to believe, that by the good Olive-tree is intended the Lord Jesus, the Head of all divine influences. Is this sentiment correct? In the first place, let it be observed, that there is no other passage in the Bible, where Christ is called an Olive-tree. Why then should we suppose, that he is intended in this passage? Secondly, If Christ be the Olive-tree, then some men do *by nature* belong to him. For the Olive-tree has *natural branches*; branches, which have grown up with it, and are distinguished from those branches, which are *grafted* into it. But those, who hold that Christ is the good Olive-tree, will hardly admit, that he has any *natural branches*; any that belong to him as *branches*, before they were *grafted*.

ed in. Thirdly, If Christ be the good Olive-tree, then those, who are in him, may be broken off, and perish. For some of the *natural branches* were broken off, and the branches, which were grafted in, are liable to be treated in the same manner. But must we give up the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, to support a favorite point? Is there a christian, who does not shudder at the thought?

Fourthly. If Christ be the good Olive-tree, what is the *root* and *fatness* of this tree? These are mentioned, as being distinct from the tree itself. But who will say, that Christ has a *root* and *fatness* distinct from himself? Surely no one, who believes; "that in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2, 9.

Fifthly. The context shows beyond all doubt, that Christ is not intended by the good Olive-tree. What is said respecting the Olive-tree is introduced to illustrate God's conduct towards the Israelites. And as soon as the metaphor is dropped, they are again introduced by name. Hence, the supposition, that Christ is meant by the Olive-tree, cannot be admitted on any reasonable principle; or by any, who consider the Apostle capable of illustrating his subject, with any propriety.

Admitting that Christ is not intended by the good Olive-tree, what does it represent? It represents the visible church of God. By the visible church we mean that Body of men, whom God has *visibly* separated from the world and taken into covenant with himself; to whom he has given his laws, statutes, and ordinances; and who *visibly* acknowledge him as their God, obey his laws, and maintain his worship. In this Body true believers are generally comprehended; but not univer-

sally. For undoubtedly there are some real believers, who do not belong to the visible church. And it is granted, that many belong to this Body, who are not real believers. In Christ's own family there was a Judas. In the churches of Galatia there were some, of whom Paul stood in doubt. And in the seven churches of Asia there were many, destitute of a christian spirit. It must then be arrogance for any visible church to pretend, that all its members are truly righteous.

The nation of Israel were separated from all other nations to be the inheritance of the Lord. Levit. 20, 24, 26; and 1 Kings, 8, 53*. And Moses says; "Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth." Deut. 7, 6. They were God's covenant people. Gen. 17, 7—Deut. 29, 1, 12—1 Chron. 16, 15, 17. To them he gave his laws, statutes, and ordinances. Levit. 18, 4—Deut. 6, 17. And surely *there was no nation so great, that had statutes and judgments so righteous, as all that law which was given them.* "To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." Rom. 9, 4. And they did publicly acknowledge Jehovah to be their God, promise to obey his laws, and engage to maintain his worship. Exo. 24, 7—Josh. 24, 24—Nehe. 9, 38. *To them belonged the fathers, and of them as concerning the flesh Christ came.* Hence they were undoubtedly the visible church, or people, of God. All the marks of the visible church belong

* The reader is requested to take his Bible, and read the passages referred to.

to them. God did own and treat them as his people. And Christ himself did always commune with them, while on earth. Indeed they were the only people, that stood in any visible covenant relation to God. And to say, that they were not his visible people, is impious, when Moses and all the prophets have declared they were.

But it may be said, that the great body of the nation were generally corrupt: and therefore, they could not be God's visible people. It is admitted, that at times the nation was corrupt; but it cannot be proved, that it was generally so. There were seasons, *when Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and there was no strange god among them.* Jer. 2, 3—Isai. 43, 12.—Deut. 32, 12. In one of the darkest periods God had reserved unto himself seven thousand in Israel. And the number was much greater in Judah. The fact is, that, like other churches, they had their times of declension and their times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. And should the history of any particular church of equal standing be written under the direction of Him, who searcheth the heart, it is not certain, that they would appear any better than the Jewish church. The question does not, however, rest on this point. It rests upon innumerable facts recorded in the sacred pages; upon the testimony of God, of Moses, and of the prophets, of Christ, and of his apostles. And those, who will not believe such testimony, *would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*

Having proved, that the Jewish nation were God's visible people, or church, we shall now show, that they were intended by the good Olive-tree.

1. They are expressly called an

Olive-tree. Speaking to them the prophet Jeremiah says: "The Lord called thy name, *A green Olive-tree*, fair and of goodly fruit." Jer. 11, 16. And of Israel it is said, "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be *as the Olive-tree*, and his smell as Lebanon." Hosea 14, 6. Here the Jewish church, as she was in ages past, is called *a green Olive-tree*. And we are informed, that, in future ages, her branches shall spread, and her beauty shall be *as the Olive-tree*. Let the scriptures then explain themselves, and there can be no doubt what is meant by the good Olive-tree.

2. Every circumstance, mentioned respecting the good olive-tree, may be fully explained by facts taken from the Jewish history, and in no other way. It is a fact, that Abraham, to whom the promises were made, was the root of that nation. Their relation to God, his oracles, and the institutions of religion, which they enjoyed, were their fatness. The covenant was established with Abraham and his seed in *their generations*. Gen. 17, 7. The children that were born, were born unto God. Ezek. 16, 20. And he required that the token of the covenant should be put upon them. Gen. 17, 10—14. They were the natural branches, the children of the covenant, to whom the promises were made. Acts, 3, 25, and 2, 39. But many of them were broken off from the good olive-tree, because of their unbelief. This was not, however, the case with all. Some of them stood by faith. A great multitude of the priests and many thousands of the people in Jerusalem were obedient to the faith. Acts 6, 7, and 21, 20. Indeed all the apostles, and elders, and members of the mother church at Jerusalem were Jews by nature, and re-

stained their church-standing, their visible relation to God. They were the natural branches, which remained, when the others were broken off. Among these natural branches, which remained, those gentiles, who professed their faith in Christ, were grafted in, and with them partook of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. They became visible members of the same Body, and were no more treated as aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel. In this respect the ancient practice of the church was in no respect altered. For Gentiles, who professed their faith in the God of Israel, and wished to unite with his people, were always adopted as brethren. There was but one law for them, and for the native Israelites. Rahab and Cornelius were taken into the church on the same principles. They were both taken from the wild olive-tree, and grafted into the good olive-tree among the natural branches. This was also the case with all those gentile converts, who were added to the church at Jerusalem. And it was no less the case with all those, who were added to other churches. For they were all branches of that church, and constituted but one Body. And had the gentile converts been as few in proportion, as in former times, the church would still have been a Jewish church; and no person would have conceived, that a new church had been formed. But when the branches, which had been grafted in, became more numerous, than the natural branches, they soon began to boast against them. Such conduct was offensive to God, and he caused them to be broken off. And all, who despise the natural branches, may be broken off, and yet the *root* and *fatness* of the olive remain to support the natural branches, when they shall be

grafted in again. For the time will come, when *Zion shall not remember the reproach of her widowhood any more; when all her children shall be taught of the Lord; and the Redeemer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* Isai. 54, 4, 13, and Rom. 11, 26. Thus we see, that every circumstance, mentioned respecting the good olive-tree, does apply to the Jewish church, and can never apply to any other Body. Hence we conclude, with the strongest reason, that the Jewish church is the good olive-tree.

3. This conclusion is confirmed by the connection, in which the olive-tree is introduced.

Foreseeing, that some would infer from his doctrine, that God had cast away his people, the apostle states, and answers, the objection in the beginning of the chapter. He then informs us, that God had still, as in the days of Elias, a remnant among the Israelites, who constituted the visible church, and with whom the covenant was confirmed. "What then, Israel [as a nation] hath not obtained that, which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." This election from the Jews were God's covenant people, his visible church, to which the gentile converts were added. He then tells us, that the fall of the nation, as a body, was not to be final. "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." To prove that their rejection was not to be final he observes; "If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." The gentile converts are then cautioned in a solemn manner not to boast against the Jews. Had this

caution been regarded, vast iniquity would have been avoided. "And if some of the [Jewish] branches be broken off, and those [a gentile] being a wild olive-tree wert grafted in amongst them [which were not broken off] and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; Boast not against the [Jewish] branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." Who could have believed, that after such a solemn warning any body of gentile professors would have dared to boast themselves against God's ancient covenant people? Yet the fact has been, that not only the Romish church, but even other bodies of professed christians, have done it to an awful degree. But they have not done it with impunity. *They also have been cut off*, and are no longer the people of God. And all, who tread in their steps, must expect to be treated in the same manner. After giving this caution, the apostle proceeds to show, that the rejection of the Jews would not be final; "And they also [who have been broken off] if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the Olive-tree [the gentile world] which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good Olive-tree; *how much more* shall these, which be the *natural branches*, be grafted into *their own* Olive-tree? For I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise

in your own conceits,) that blindness *in part* [not in full] is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," or the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. See Luke 21, 24. The apostle then comes to his grand inference. "And so all Israel shall be saved." This he proves by referring to several ancient prophecies, where it is written; "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." And to explain this subject more fully, he observes; "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Here the point is fully established, that God had not finally cast away his people, or broken the covenant, which he made with their fathers. For wise reasons many of them had been broken off from their own Olive-tree; but a remnant still remained, and the whole nation were again to be called in. The Strength of Israel is not a man, that he should lie; or the son of man, that he should repent. "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance."

Have we wrested the apostles words? Has not his reasoning been fairly stated? Must not every reader see, that the unbelieving Jews, who were finally broken off, were *natural branches* of the good Olive-tree? And is it not equally evident, that believing gentiles were grafted into the same Olive-tree, from which the Jews were broken off, among the natural branches, which remained? What then was this Olive-tree? Certainly it was not the Jewish nation considered as a body politic. For the unbelieving Jews were no

more broken off from this body, than the believing Jews. And the believing Gentiles were not, in the apostolic age, grafted into this body. What then was the good Olive-tree? It was that visible church, which was planted on the plains of Mamre, of which Abraham was the root, and of which as concerning the flesh Christ came. It was that church, which God had chosen for his own inheritance, and redeemed with an outstretched arm. It was that church, which had her maker for her husband, which brought forth her children unto God, and put the token of his covenant upon them. It was Israel considered as the visible people of God. To this Body every Israelite belonged, as a *natural branch*, until he was broken off. To this Body believing gentiles were admitted in the days of Moses and the prophets. Of this Body it was predicted; that *the gentiles should come to their light, that their seed should inherit the gentiles, and that kings should minister unto them.* Isai. 60, 1—5; and 54, 3; and 49, 18; and 56, 3; Zach. 2, 10—12. And believing gentiles were admitted into this Body by the apostles. There can then be no possible doubt, but that this is the good olive-tree.

From this view of the subject several useful reflections may be made.

1. The Jewish church had not been destroyed, and a new church formed, when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans. The root, and the fatness, and the olive-tree, and many of the *natural branches* remained the same, as they were before. The Husbandman was, indeed, at work, cutting off the dead branches, and grafting in other branches; but he had not cut down the good olive-tree. And Paul surely had no idea, that he ever would do it. For had this been done, the

gifts and calling of God *would not have been without repentance.*

2. The Christian church is a continuation of the Jewish church. The good old olive-tree remained uninjured in the days of the apostles. It had many *natural branches*, that were “fair and of goodly fruit;” and many new branches were grafted in among them, and partook of its root and fatness. These branches did not bear the root; but the root them. Being united to Christ, they were acknowledged to be *Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Hence the christian church, in the apostolic age, was evidently a continuation of the Jewish church. It was the good old olive-tree, adorned with *natural and ingrafted branches.* If this tree has been cut down, it was not done by apostolic hands. And we have a right to demand by what authority it was done.

3. The good olive-tree had *natural branches.* This cannot be denied, let us call the olive what we please. What then were these *natural branches*? The Psalmist says that the *children* of those, who fear the Lord, *shall be like olive-plants round about their table.* Psalm 128, 3. The children, which the church bore unto God, which had the token of the covenant upon them, were educated in her bosom, and partook of the root and fatness of *their own* olive-tree, were the *natural branches.* And “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Matth. 19, 14.

4. Churches should be so constructed, as to have *natural branches.* In the apostolic age the good olive-tree had *natural branches.* Such it must always have. And churches should be so constructed as to resemble, in this respect, the good olive-tree. They must have *natural branches.* Here we have the pattern, which was shown us in the

mount, and which God himself constructed. Shall we, like the apostles, copy after it, or not?

5. The children of believing Jews are now the *natural branches* of the good olive-tree, and they always will be. "For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." They are the children of the covenant and of the promise, which God made to Abraham. The promise is to them, as well as to their fathers. They belong to *their own* olive-tree. And the token of the covenant must be put upon them. Hence, when Jehovah promises to bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, he says; "Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me." Jer. 30, 20.

6. The children of believing gentiles do now stand in the same relation to the visible church, as the children of believing Jews. For believing gentiles are no longer aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but fellow-citizens with the saints. They are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. They partake of the root and fatness of the good olive-tree. And they must be considered as one born in the land. For thus saith the God of Israel, "One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." Exod. 12, 48, 49. Hence the children of believing gentiles are *natural branches* of the good olive-tree. And the token of the covenant must also be put upon them." "Else were these children unclean; but now are they holy." 1 Cor. 7, 14. "For if the root be holy, so are the branches."

7. It is dangerous resting in any religious privileges. The branches of the good olive-tree, whether natural or ingrafted, are liable to be

broken off. And they cannot stand without faith. Every branch, that beareth fruit, will be purged, that it may be more fruitful; but every branch that beareth not fruit, will be taken away. Hence we must not rest in religious privileges; but improve them.

8. Those are guilty of extreme ingratitude, who endeavour to degrade the Jewish church, and boast themselves against it. Surely such must be wise in their own conceits. They little consider, that all the invaluable blessings of the gospel come to us through the Jewish Church; and that it is of their root and fatness, that all gentile believers partake. But they should remember, that they do not *bear the root; but the root them*. "The sons also of them that afflicted thee, (saith God to his ancient church) shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." Isai. 60, 14, 15.

9. Those, who sympathize with the Jews in their low estate, will have abundant reason to rejoice with them.

They are now, indeed, scattered among all nations; but the Lord their God will turn their captivity, and have compassion upon them. "All Israel shall be saved." "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." Jeremi. 31, 10, &c. "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Isra-

el; for lo I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest and quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee." Jer. 29, 10, 11. "Shake thyself from the dust: arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money." Isai. 52, 2, 3—See also Isai. 60th chapter—Ezek. 38th chapter—Hosea 1, 10, 11, and 2, 4, 5, and Zech. 12, 6—and 14th chapter.

Then those, who sympathize with the Jews in their low estate, will hear a voice saying unto them; "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her. That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Isai. 66, 12, &c.

Lastly. Those, who regard the example of Christ and his apostles, will not refuse to commune with a church because it has *natural branches*.

The good olive-tree, to which the apostles belonged, had *natural branches*. And Christ certainly communed with the Jewish church. Indeed, *he was a minister of the circumcision*. See Rom. 15, 8. If we are followers of him, we shall not, then, refuse to commune with a church, because it has *natural branches*.

And those who do refuse communion on this ground, would not, if they acted consistently, have communed with the church of God at Jerusalem. For this church had *natural branches*. But surely there is no Christian, who is prepared to say, that he would not commune with that church, to which the apostles, and elders, and brethren at Jerusalem belonged. Let all, then, who bear the christian name, act consistently in this respect.

ON PROVIDING MATERIALS FOR A
FUTURE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY
OF THE DISTRICT OF MAINE.

MR. EDITOR,

The part of the country, in which we live, is new, but is rapidly rising into importance. Should the territory of the District of Maine become as populous, in proportion to its extent, as is Massachusetts Proper, and should the churches multiply and flourish, as it may be hoped they will, the future Ecclesiastical Historian of New-England, will need to derive no small portion of his materials from us. Is it not proper, that we should now begin to consider by what means they may be supplied? Our churches being mostly of recent origin, it is obvious, that correct histories of them to this time might easily be procured; and these, by a little care and labor, might be regularly continued. The object appearing to me important, I venture to suggest, through you, the following plan for obtaining it.

Let each of the Associations in the District request its members to furnish a succinct history of the origin and progress of the churches, of which they are respectively pastors, to be lodged with the Scribe. Let the Associations agree on some place of general deposit; and let their Scribes be directed to transmit the histories lodged with them to that place. Perhaps a more suitable place of deposit could not be selected, than the Library of Bowdoin College, the Librarian of which, it is presumed, would be willing to take charge of them, and keep them for the inspection of

those, who might be interested to examine them. When collected there, they might easily be arranged in chronological order; and, for a trifling expense, might be transcribed into a book to be procured for the purpose.

For a regular continuation of these histories, let the Associations request their members to furnish the Scribes at suitable periods, at the expiration, for instance, of every five years, details of the occurrences, which appear worthy of being recorded, and let these be transmitted as before, and entered into the Ecclesiastical Book.

Besides the general benefit of furnish-

ing authentic materials for the future historian, several collateral ones would arise, particularly this—ministers would be excited to keep a regular record of church proceedings, which is now, in many instances, too much neglected.

I will only add, that the Cumberland Association have adopted the plan, above recommended, so far as to have requested their members to prepare histories of their respective churches and to lodge them with the Scribe; and they have found the reading of these histories in their meetings a pleasing and profitable exercise.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

From the Panoplist.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

This Society held its fifteenth annual meeting in Boston, on the 24th and 25th days of May last. The meeting was opened by singing an appropriate psalm, after which the Rev. Dr. Spring, in the absence of the President, offered a prayer. The Society then attended to the following

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES.

BRETHREN,

The season has again returned, at which it is made the duty of the Trustees to report to you their doings, and such information as may be interesting and useful, in regard to the great object for which we are associated.

At the last anniversary, such information was communicated, as had then been received from Messrs. Schermerhorn and Mills, who, under the patronage, partly of this Society and partly of other Societies, were engaged in a missionary tour in the western and southern parts of our country. But they had not then returned; nor was the Board then in possession of a full account of their mission. As general intelligence for the use of missionary societies was a great object of that mission, and as the two missionaries were remarkably industrious in collecting intelligence; it

is thought right to report a brief summary of what, since their return, they have largely communicated, as the result of their observations and inquiries. The summary is as follows.

In the state of PENNSYLVANIA, west of the Allegany mountains, there are about 200,000 inhabitants; 101 Presbyterian* churches, and 57 ministers; two Methodist circuits, in which are employed 12 itinerent preachers; very few, if any Baptists; a few Halcyons; and a society of Germans, who have all things in common, are remarkable for industry, sobriety and order, and have a preacher, zealous in directing their attention to divine things. In this district, there are two small colleges, whose pious instructors make it a very particular object to prepare young men for the ministry; but the means of general education are scanty. The Synod of Pittsburg, composed of Presbyteries partly within the district and partly within the adjoining state of Ohio, acts as a Missionary Society; and expends annually, about one thousand dollars for missionary objects, a considerable part of which sum has been applied for the benefit of the Wyandot Indians. The churches within the limits

* Under this name are included, not only the Presbyterians connected with the General Assembly, but also those of the Associate Reformed and of the Associate Synod, Covenanters, and Congregationalists.

of this Synod, are represented as having been remarkably blessed with effusions of the Holy Spirit, and as being in a very prosperous state; but many thousands around them are unsupplied with the stated means of religion, and are famishing for the word of life.

In the state of OHIO, containing a population of more than 330,000; there are 73 Presbyterian or Congregational churches, and 49 ministers; between 20 and 30 Methodist preachers, employed in different circuits; 10 or 12 Baptist societies; several societies of Friends or Quakers; considerable numbers of a sect called New Lights; a few Halcions, a few Swedenburghers, and too many Universalists and Deists. The district of this state called New Connecticut, the inhabitants of which are in great part from the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts, has received very particular attention from the Connecticut Missionary Society, has been recently favored with special divine influences, and on the whole, presents a comparatively pleasing and hopeful aspect. In some other parts of the state some attention is paid to religious institutions, and a few flourishing churches are established; but in the state at large the means of religion are but scantily supplied and lightly esteemed, and the apparent consequences are such as might reasonably be expected. The sabbath is awfully disregarded, gross ignorance of divine things is general, and great laxity of morals prevails.—At Marietta, Messrs. Schermerhorn and Mills succeeded in obtaining the establishment of a Bible Society, which received the support of the pious of different denominations; and by which three ministers were appointed to ride through the state to preach on the subject, shewing the importance of such an institution, and soliciting subscriptions and donations.

In the state of VIRGINIA containing a population of almost a million, there are only about 70 churches, Presbyterian or Congregational, and about 40 ministers. In what is called Old Virginia, or the part of the state from the sea board back to the Blue Ridge, the Episcopal church, which formerly held a complete ascendancy, and was well endowed, is now in a deplorable condition. To about one hundred Episcopal societies, which have still some existence, the

number of clergymen is computed at less than thirty. The societies have for a considerable time been dwindling, and the houses decaying; and the district at large, comprising nearly three fourths of the whole population of the state, though traversed by itinerant Methodists and Baptists, yet exhibits, in a religious respect, an extensive and dreary waste.—The district between the Blue Ridge and the Allegany mountains presents a different aspect. With scarcely a seventh part of the whole population of the state, it contains just about one half of the total number of the Presbyterian or Congregational churches and ministers; and these churches are said to be in a more flourishing condition, than any elsewhere to be found in the Southern States.—In the remaining district, comprising the counties west of the Allegany, there are but twelve Presbyterian churches and three ministers; but the Methodists and Baptists are considerably numerous.—In this ancient and great state there is a most melancholy famine of the word of the Lord.

KENTUCKY, with a population of more than four hundred thousand, has 91 Presbyterian churches, and 40 ministers; 20 Methodist circuits, in which about as many itinerant preachers are employed; 293 Baptist societies of different descriptions, and 143 preachers; two Episcopal churches; several societies of New Lights; a considerable number of Roman Catholic societies; some Shakers, Dunkers, and Universalists; and many Infidels. Of the Baptists one entire Association, comprising 28 churches, is Arian or Socinian. The Roman Catholics have a Bishop, a College, a Nunnery, several Chapels in different counties, and are said to be increasing. The Infidels, though less open and bold than formerly, are nevertheless active. In 1812 no less than three infidel publications issued from the press in Lexington; a copy of one of which, elegantly bound, was presented to each member of the Legislature. In this state there are very few schools, owing, it is said, in great part, to a prevalent Baptist influence, unfriendly to learning. The mass of the people, extremely ignorant, are either entirely regardless of religion, or lamentably blown about by every wind of doctrine. The Sabbath

receives very little religious regard; and intemperance, profanity, gambling and lewdness are prevalent vices.

TENNESSEE, with more than 260,000 inhabitants, has 79 Presbyterian churches, and 26 ministers; 19 itinerant Methodist preachers, employed in several circuits; 126 Baptist churches, and 74 preachers; a few New Lights, and some of various other denominations. The Presbyterian interest is increasing. In East Tennessee, the two Colleges, one at Knoxville and the other in Green County, are great blessings. At the latter, (of which the Rev. Charles Coffin, D. D. is President,) there were several students preparing for the ministry, when our missionaries were there. In this district also, there has recently been established a Society, Missionary, Tract, and Bible, the only Missionary Society, excepting the Synod of Pittsburg, west of the Allegany. In relation to this Society, the Rev. President Coffin, in a letter to Mr. Schermerhorn, says, "For our Society we expect more members than means, and more ground than our missionaries can occupy. I should anticipate great good were the Massachusetts Missionary Society to turn some attention to this state. I was one who assisted to organize" that Society; "I greatly rejoice in its increase, and have reason to hope they will try to aid us to the extent of their power."—In West Tennessee, the Rev. "Mr. Blackburn is of opinion, that many churches might be organized, if there were a proper person employed in the business; and regrets that his time is so much occupied with his school, that he has no leisure to devote to this object. It might greatly promote religion, if some missionary body would employ this man in their service, permitting him, at the same time, to supply his own societies."—In this state at large, the prevailing vices are the same as in the state of Kentucky; nor is the general state of society very different.

In the MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY, containing about 58,000 inhabitants, there are 6 Presbyterian churches, 4 ministers; 9 itinerant Methodist preachers; 27 Baptist churches, and 15 preachers. "The state of society in this Territory is deplorable. You scarcely see a man ride without his pistol, or walk without a dagger in his bosom. It is be-

lieved that more innocent blood is shed in this Territory and in Louisiana, in one year, than in all the Middle and Eastern States, in ten years." At Natches, in this Territory, Messrs. Schermerhorn and Mills procured a Bible Society to be established under favorable auspices.

The INDIANA TERRITORY, with about 25,000 inhabitants, has one Presbyterian church and minister; five itinerant Methodist preachers; 29 Baptist churches, and 14 preachers; six New Light preachers, and a few Shakers.

In the ILLINOIS TERRITORY, containing about 13,000 inhabitants, there are five or six Methodist preachers in several circuits, and about six hundred members of the Methodist connexion, and five Baptist churches containing about 120 members.

In the whole great extent of country, thus surveyed, there are not two thirds as many ministers, Presbyterian or Congregational, as there are in Massachusetts Proper; but those ministers are generally of respectable attainments in knowledge, of strictly evangelical sentiments, and of good reputation for piety, and regular devotedness to their work. In most of those parts, the Methodists & Baptists are the prevailing denominations. The sentiments of the Methodists, and their general character are much the same there as in other parts of our country. The Baptists in the western States and Territories are in their sentiments extremely various. The better informed are said to be Calvinistic; but a very considerable proportion are either Antinomian or Arminian, and not a few are Arian or Socinian. Some of them have a religious regard to the Sabbath; but by the greater part the sacredness of that holy day is openly denied. Their preachers are not only unlearned, but they hold learning in disesteem and contempt. While they decry human knowledge, they pretend to divine inspiration. They pay great attention to dreams and visions, mysterious impulses and impressions; and of these the relations and experiences, upon which members are admitted to their communion, in no small part consist. The New Lights, of whom mention has been made, are a sect which sprung up in Kentucky in 1803. Believing that the extraordinary work then prevailing was the commencement of the millenium,

and that all mystery and obscurity in religion was then to be done away ; they gave license to their heated imaginations, and proceeded to explain the Scriptures, according to what they called reason ; and it is a remarkable fact, that a wild fanaticism in those western regions conducted its votaries to the denial of the same doctrines, and to the adoption of nearly the same opinions, as the vaunted criticism and liberality of other parts of Christendom have done. This sect, which for a while was numerous, is now decreasing. The Halcions of the West are a sort of mystics, who set out with the avowed design of abolishing all distinction of religious denominations, and uniting all professed Christians in one communion, and under one name. They renounce all creeds, confessions, and catechisms ; and profess to receive the Holy Scriptures, as a divine help, handed down from heaven, to aid their reason in forming just ideas of the divine character and of divine things. But say they, "We receive not the Holy Scriptures as the foundation of our faith in religion ; for we conceive that other foundation can never be laid, equal to that foundation stone, which was laid before Joshua, (of which the Scriptures clearly speak,) whereon were seven eyes, which we conceive to be the seven communicable attributes of God."* They hold that "the office of Christ on earth was to explain the eternal laws of religion to man ;" they practice baptism indifferently by sprinkling or immersion, and decline matrimony, under pretence of choosing spiritual mates. This sect is also on the decrease.

On the whole, throughout the States and territories reviewed, there is a deplorable want of the preached Gospel and of the stated and regular administration of divine ordinances ; a deplorable want, indeed, of all the means of good religious instruction ; (for but a small part of the people possess the Bible :) and therefore a loud and affecting call for the benevolent aid of Missionary and Bible Societies. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has sent a few missionaries, from time to time, into these destitute regions, and the attention of the Philadelphia, New York, and Connecticut Bible Societies has

been turned towards them ; but unless much greater exertions shall be made, than have yet been made, by the pious and the liberal, it will be long before any adequate supply, either of ministers or of Bibles will be furnished to them.

But regions of still deeper and more deplorable darkness and corruption are now to come under review, regions but lately annexed to the United States.

In the district of country, west of the Mississippi, called the **MISSOURI TERRITORY**, containing a scattered population of about 21,000, there are 445 members of Methodist Societies, among whom six itinerant preachers are employed ; and 130 members of the Baptist churches, with no settled preachers. It is estimated that about two-fifths of the inhabitants are Americans, and the rest French ; and both the one and the other are in a state of extreme ignorance, and the greater part as visibly without God in the world as heathens. A Mr. Stephen Hampstead of St. Louis, the principal place in this Territory, who was formerly of Connecticut, in a letter to our missionaries, says, "I believe the formation of a Bible and Tract Society, would be very useful here. I have distributed a few tracts that I brought with me ; and they were received with thankfulness, and I trust have done good. If any of the Societies in New England will send on some Bibles or Tracts to my charge, I will distribute them among the poor and needy, who are famishing for the word of life. In my interviews with the heads of families and officers of government, they have expressed a strong desire to have a minister of education, piety, morals, and talents settled at St. Louis, and that they would contribute liberally and continually to his support."

The state of **LOUISIANA** has a population of about 77,000 free people, and about 35,000 slaves. Of the free people it is estimated that about one fifth are Americans. "The settlements east of lakes Mauripas and Bouchantrain to Pearl river are few and scattering, but chiefly American. The settlements on the Mississippi are very flourishing from Point Coupee to some distance below New Orleans ; and on both sides of the river they present almost a continued village. The inhabitants of the upper part of the settlements are from Canada ;

* *H. Epist. No. 44 and 45, Lex. 1803.*

of the middle, Germans; and of the lower part, French and Spanish from Europe. All speak the same language, and are similar in habits, manners and religion. In the settlements on the Gulph, west of the Mississippi, the people are Spanish, French and American. On Red River they are principally French, and in the Washita American. The state of society in this country is very deplorable. The people are entirely ignorant of divine things, and have been taught only to attend mass and count their beads. They are without schools, & of the French inhabitants not one in ten can read. Their whole business seems to be, to make the most they can of their plantations, and to get gain. They are not intemperate in drinking, but continence is with them no virtue. The Sabbath to them is a high holiday, and on it is committed perhaps more actual sin, than during the whole week beside. Dancing, gambling, parties of pleasure, theatrical amusements, dining parties, &c. are the common business of the day, after mass in the morning. In the whole state there is not one Protestant church, unless it be a small one of Baptists, about to be organized at Appelousas. The Methodists have had itinerants up Red River and Washita, but are exceedingly unpopular. The religion professed is entirely Roman Catholic. The clergy of this order, however, are not numerous; perhaps fifteen. The Bishop and four or five priests reside in New Orleans. Bishop de Bury I believe to be a man of piety; and I know that he laments the degraded state of their church in Louisiana, and mourns over the depravity and wickedness of the place in which he resides. The Bishop and Father Antonio favored the establishment of the Louisiana Bible Society, which I trust will prove a great and lasting blessing to the state.*

"The Bishop," says Mr. Mills, "is considered as a man of character and of extensive information; he came from Baltimore and has been in New Orleans but a few months. He gave it as his opinion, that there were not at this time twelve Bibles in the vicinity of New Orleans. He spoke of this city as being the most desperately wicked place he

had ever been in;" though "he had been in France, and had opportunity of ascertaining the morals and religion in the cities of that kingdom."

The Louisiana Bible Society was established at New Orleans by the exertions of our missionaries, while they were there. The Legislature was then in session, and gentlemen of influence, not in the city only, but in the state at large, became members. Very considerable attention was excited to the subject, and many people began earnestly to inquire for the Bible. On the day the Bible Society was formed, Mr. Mills writes, "I was at the store of Mr. Stackhouse this morning, and during a short stay there, five or six French people called on him inquiring for Bibles in their language. Some of them belonged to the city, and some to the country." Two days afterwards he writes: "Mr. Stackhouse informed me this evening that a number of people called on him for Bibles, mostly French Catholics. This is certainly a wonderful day for New Orleans.—Mr. Stackhouse told me that if he had fifty Bibles, they would all be disposed of at once."—A Mr. Dow has received, through a friend, twenty or thirty English Bibles, from the British and Foreign Bible Society. These were all distributed.

During their stay of about three weeks in New Orleans, our missionaries preached as often as they had opportunity. Of the last Sabbath Mr. Mills says, "In the evening the congregation was numerous for the place; perhaps 200 attended. Brother Schermerhorn preached. It was said by those who had lived in the city a considerable time, they never saw so full a meeting before. After sermon, a collection of 34 dollars was made for the missionaries."—Mr. Schermerhorn had an invitation, a pretty pressing one, it would seem, to remain at New Orleans, and settle in the ministry there. In relation to this he says, "I regretted it could not be so; for I believe the Lord has much people in that city; that it is an ample field for usefulness, and the most important situation in the western country."

"In West Florida," says Mr. Mills, "the people are extremely ignorant. The attention of some of them has been lately called to religious subjects. Numbers of them lose no time in soliciting

* *Mr. Schermerhorn's Report.*

for a Bible whenever a prospect, that they may be supplied is presented, which is very rare. There are some families in this part of our country, who never saw a Bible, nor heard of Jesus Christ; and some there are, hopefully pious, who cannot obtain a Bible or even a Testament. The people to whom I now refer speak the English language."

The view now given of these extensive, dark, and famishing regions of our country, can hardly fail deeply to affect the hearts of the friends of the Redeemer, and of those for whom he died; and if it have the effect to wake up the members of this Society and others to more earnest prayer and exertion for the imparting of the blessings of the Gospel to such as are perishing for want of them, the design of presenting it will be answered.—From this distant excursion we return to things nearer home.

(To be continued.)

A letter from the Rev. Moses Bradford, of Frankestown, N. H. to one of the publishing committee of the Vermont Evangelical Magazine, dated,

FRANKESTOWN, FEB. 8, 1813.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

A few particulars respecting the seriousness in this town must suffice for the present.

The late revival became more apparent in January and February 1812, and has continued more or less to the present time. It appeared most powerful in the latter part of summer and in the beginning of fall. The attention has continued, considerably, since. Though the fruits of it have not been so apparent, yet numbers continue to be impressed, and some of late have entertained a hope.

The means have been the publick worship of God, on the sabbath, occasional lectures, conferences, concerts for prayer, funeral addresses,

catechising schools, family instructions, &c. in connection with our Union Lectures, attended once a fortnight by the Ministers, Deacons, professors and others from several towns, in the vicinity, in some central place. The Union Lectures have been remarkably attended, for almost a year, (since their first establishment,) in all seasons, and with unusual solemnity. Their good effects have become manifest, in several respects. In addition to these means I ought to notice, that the solemn dispensations of Divine Providence, in sending unusually desolating sickness, the last year, into several towns, the settlement of two ministers in the vicinity, and other solemn occasions have tended to render serious the minds of numbers.

The revival has not been confined to this town, but several neighboring towns have shared more or less, in its happy effects. There have been added to the churches, about thirty persons in Greenfield, fifty-two in Lyndborough, seventy-nine in Frankestown*, and several in Mont-Vernon, New-Boston and Antrim. Some of these, however, who have joined the churches since the revival, had experienced a hopeful change before the commencement of it. The subjects of this work have been of various ages, from 15 to 65. Far the greatest proportion of them were baptized in infancy or their minority. This was the case with 75 of the number, who joined the church in this town. Dear brother, pray for us.

M. BRADFORD.

* We have lately learned that the whole number, which has been added to the church in Frankestown is now 110.

"The value of the art of Printing, as it respects the spread of the holy Scriptures, is strikingly evident, from the following memoranda of antiquity.

"In the year 1272, the pay of a labouring man was three half pence per day*. In 1274, the price of a Bible, with a commentary, fairly written, was thirty pounds†. That precious volume, which may now be obtained, by many labourers, for one day's pay, would then have cost them more than thirteen years labour.

"It is further worthy of remark, that, in the year 1240, the building of two arches of London Bridge cost twenty-five pounds‡; five pounds less than the value of a Bible! How great are the privileges of British Christians! We now enjoy the blaze of gospel-day; the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage. God grant that our ancestors may never rise in judgment against us for the abuse, or neglect, of the Scriptures!

"The above statement will also serve to show, that the honour of distributing the holy Scriptures extensively has peculiarly devolved upon the present day. The labour of writing them is no more. Their price now is very reasonable. The papal prohibition against reading them has lost its force, and multitudes, with outstretched arms, are earnestly imploring them."

Evangelical Magazine, March 1807.

*See Dugdale's Warwickshire. †See Stow's Annals, page 416. ‡See Madox's History of the Exchequer.

CONNECTICUT BIBLE SOCIETY.

"In the fifth report of the Connecticut Bible Society it is stated,

that the Society has distributed the last year 2522 Bibles; since the organization of the society in May, 1809, it has distributed 10,141 Bibles. Their receipts the last year amounted to 3345 dollars."

RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETIES.

It is stated in a letter from the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society; "that in the Russian empire, the Bible Societies are making rapid progress; being now at least seven in number, which are engaged in printing the Holy Scriptures in ten different languages."

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

"On Wednesday, May 4th, 1814, the tenth anniversary of this society was held at the Free-Mason's Hall, Queen-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Report, read by Lord Teignmouth, the President, contained a variety of interesting matter relative to the progress made by the Institution in different parts of the world.

The total of net receipts within the year was reported to be \$387,628, and of payments, 375,368 dollars: and the Society's engagements with its domestic and foreign societies, for the current year, 96,000 dollars. The total issue of Bibles and Testaments by the Society, both at home and on the continent, amounted to 1,026,815, and if to these be added 122,000 printed, or now printing, by societies in Europe only, aided by the society at home, the total amount will be 1,158,850 copies.

His royal highness the Duke of Kent and many other distinguished characters took a share in the business of the day. From the importance of the communications, the number and rank of the attendance,

and the interest excited by the able and impressive addresses, this may be justly considered as having exceeded, in point of effect, any preceding anniversary."

London Gazette of May 21.

See Weekly Messenger of Aug. 5.

The following letter from the Rev.

Mr. —, one of the pastors of the German Lutheran church in Paris, addressed to Mr. —, February 5th, 1812, is from the appendix to the ninth report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"SIR—About a month ago, our Consistory presented their united thanks to you for your present of 250 Bibles, and 50 New-Testaments, made to the needy members of our congregation. I now feel myself called upon to add my individual thanks to those of the Consistory, having since had many opportunities of observing the beneficial effects of this seasonable gift. I know well, that a present of this description was greatly wanted, both on account of the awful times, in which infidelity, with fanatic fury, had exerted itself to tear the bible out of the hands of the people, and also in consequence of the impoverished state of many members of our congregation, who find it impossible to purchase a bible. But, I freely own, I did not expect that this gift would be received and improved so well as is actually the case. Not only our old invalids, but many other poor families, whom I am in the habit of visiting, make a diligent and conscientious use of their bible. To the sufferers, whose number is very considerable in these times of pressure and calamity, it affords comfort and refreshment. Our invalids daily assemble round the bed

of one of their sick comrades, reading in it, and edifying themselves together. An amiable young German, who had received one of our bibles, died a few days ago. His bible, which then came into the hands of a Catholic family in which he resided, was claimed by a Protestant for the Consistory; but their departed friend, having been accustomed, after his work was done, to read the bible to them and their children, they had been inspired with such respect and love for this blessed work, that they expressed an earnest desire to retain it; to which the Consistory willingly agreed. Similar instances frequently occur.

But what is still more gratifying to my heart, is the wish of numbers who have not obtained a copy as yet, to be put in possession of it. Almost every day fresh applications are made, not only on the part of our Lutherans, but also of our Reformed and Catholic fellow-christians. Indeed, we are at present quite overwhelmed with applications of this kind, which we are unable to satisfy, our desire of establishing a bible society having not been accomplished as yet."

ANECDOTE.

A comparison of the 53d chapter of Isaiah, with the account given in the four Evangelists of the sufferings of Christ, was the instrument of convincing the witty and wicked Rochester. The narrative by Burnet, is as follows: Rochester said to Burnet, "Mr. Parsons, in order to his conviction, read to him the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and compared that with our Saviour's passion, that he might there see a prophecy concerning it, written many ages before it was done; which the Jews that blasphemed Jesus Christ, still kept in their hands as a book divinely inspired. He said to me—That, as he heard it read, he felt an inward force upon him, which

so enlightened his mind, and convinced him, that he could resist it no longer; for the words had an authority, which did shoot like rays or beams in his mind, so that he was not only convinced by the reasonings he had about it, which satisfied his understanding, but by a power, which did so effectually constrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in his Saviour, as if he had seen him in the clouds. He had made it to be read so often to him, that he had got it by heart; and went through a great part of it in discourse with me, with a

sort of heavenly pleasure, giving me his reflections upon it. Some few I remember: Who hath believed our report? Here, he said, was foretold the opposition the gospel was to meet with from such wretches as he was. He hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there was no beauty, that we should desire him. On this he said, "the meanness of his appearance and person has made vain and foolish people disparage him, because he came not in such a fool's coat as they delight in."

Religious Remembrancer.

POETRY.

From the Christian Observer.

HYMN FOR EPIPHANY.

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us
thine aid!

Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is
laid!

Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are
shining,
Low lies his bed with the beasts of
the stall!

Angels adore him in slumber reclining;
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of
all!

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devo-
tion,

Odours of Edom and offerings divine;
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the
ocean,

Myrrh from the forest and gold from
the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;
Vainly with gold would his favour
secure;

Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the
poor!

Brightest and best of the sons of the
morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us
thine aid!

Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is
laid."

ORIGINAL POETRY.

ENGROSS'D with cares, beset with sin,
Fill'd with tormenting doubts within,
I droop along the way:
Darkness before, and death behind,
And nought to ease the anxious mind,
Or yield one cheering ray.

Temptations strong before me rise,
Illusive joys deceive my eyes,
My faith is weak, or gone;
My heart is hard, it cannot melt,
Yet conscience still presents my guilt,
And thunders you're undone.

I want a heart to mourn for sin,
To feel its guilt and plague within;
And groan beneath the weight;
O that my spirit mourn'd with grief,
That tears suffus'd my blushing cheek,
That sin my soul could hate.

My broken vows rise fresh in view,
My early goodness like the dew
Dissolving into air:
Yet there is mercy with the Lord,
There still is balm in Gilead,
And a Physician there.

Why, O my soul, why thus cast down?
Believe the Saviour, take the crown,
And enter on thy rest:
I come, my Lord, to ease my pains,
To wash my guilt, and purge my stains,
And be divinely blest.